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Summary record of the 2654th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 10 August 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Amir

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China (CERD/C/CHN/14-17; CERD/C/CHN-HKG/14-17; CERD/C/CHN-MAC/14-17; and CERD/C/CHN/Q/14-17)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of China took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Yu** Jianhua (China), introducing the combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China (CERD/C/CHN/14-17), said that the Chinese delegation was composed of 48 officials and experts from 32 departments of the Central Government and the Governments of the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao. Eight members of the delegation were members of the Tibetan, Uighur, Yao, Korean, Hui or Bai ethnic groups.

3. During the period under review, China had made tremendous progress in all areas and had entered into a new era of development. China was a unified multi-ethnic State in which the Han and 55 other ethnic groups made up the Chinese nation. In recent years, the notion of a Chinese nation where the Han Chinese and the country's ethnic minorities, and the different ethnic minorities among themselves, were mutually interdependent had gained further acceptance among the population. In March 2018, article 4 of the Constitution had been amended to reflect more fully the central feature of the State party's ethnic policy, namely the steadfast realization of ethnic equality, the enhancement of ethnic unity and the promotion of inter-ethnic mutual assistance and harmony with a view to all ethnic groups working together to achieve common prosperity, development and the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.

4. China was continuing to develop its system of regional ethnic autonomy. The legal framework for ethnic affairs was based on the Constitution and supplemented by the Law on Regional National Autonomy. Since 2012, the Government had actively promoted a strategy of law-based governance across the board. Legal thinking and the rule of law had become the means for promoting the development of ethnic groups and protecting their legitimate rights and interests. Over 20 laws and administrative regulations had been enacted or amended to prohibit discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and incitement to ethnic hatred, promote ethnic equality, enhance inter-ethnic unity and guarantee freedom of religious belief, including the Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law and the Regulations on Religious Affairs. Autonomous ethnic regions had enacted or amended over 20 regulations on the exercise of autonomy and over 200 separate regulations on, inter alia, political, economic, social, cultural and educational issues, thus refining the legal framework for ethnic affairs. Officials from ethnic minorities played an important role in State affairs and had accounted for 14.7 per cent of the total number of deputies who had attended the Thirteenth National People's Congress.

5. In response to the concerns raised by the Committee about underdevelopment in ethnic areas, in recent years the Government had made great efforts to bridge the gap between ethnic areas and other, more developed areas in the country. To that end, a series of policies and plans had been rolled out, including the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development 2016–2020, which specifically referred to the promotion of the healthy development of ethnic areas and the development and opening up of border regions. Those policies and plans covered a wide array of issues and had resulted in the greater enjoyment of human rights by ethnic minorities.

6. In ethnic areas, the economy had grown and living standards continued to improve. In 2017, the total output value of eight ethnic provinces, namely, Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Guizhou, Yunnan and Qinghai, had grown by 7.6 per cent over 2016 and was 0.7 per cent higher than the national average. The per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents had likewise increased by 8.4 and 9.2 per cent, respectively. By 2012, the poverty rate had fallen from 34.1 per cent to 6.8 per cent. In the space of five years, over 20 million people living in those eight provinces had been lifted

out of poverty. Health, education, cultural and ecological outcomes had been buoyed by economic growth.

7. Some ethnic areas were still lagging behind developed regions in terms of economic and social progress owing to their geographical constraints and weak economic bases. China was at a crucial stage of poverty alleviation and needed to do more to address livelihood issues and to protect the ecosystem. In order to refine the legal framework for ethnic autonomy, the Government needed to enforce policies and laws intended to promote equality and solidarity among ethnic groups. It would likewise adopt more effective measures to speed up the all-round development of ethnic areas and continue to ensure the greater enjoyment of human rights by ethnic minority groups.

8. **Mr. Chan** Shui-fu (Hong Kong, China), introducing the State party's report on the implementation of the Convention in Hong Kong, China (CERD/C/CHN-HKG/14-17), said that some 250,000 members of ethnic minorities lived in the Special Autonomous Region. The Government of Hong Kong, China, was committed to meeting its obligations under the Convention and, to that end, had taken measures to strengthen the protection of individuals from racial discrimination and to provide members of ethnic minorities with equal opportunities and facilitate their social integration.

9. Some members of ethnic minorities had found it difficult to integrate owing to language and cultural differences. In 2018, a steering committee had been set up to coordinate, review and monitor support for members of ethnic minorities, and the sum of $500 million had been earmarked in the 2018/19 budget to strengthen support services. The Government was also committed to helping ethnic minority students to adapt to the local education system and master Mandarin Chinese. In response to the concerns raised by the Committee about the fact that the teaching of Mandarin as a second language to students from an immigrant background had not been adopted as an official education policy, the Education Bureau had begun to implement the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework in primary and secondary schools in the 2014/15 school year. The purpose of the Framework was to help non-Mandarin-speaking students overcome the difficulties associated with learning Mandarin as a second language and transition to mainstream language classes as soon as possible, while providing them with the opportunities to pursue further studies. In the 2014/15 school year, the Education Bureau had increased the additional funding available to schools to over $200 million per year to support the implementation of the Framework and the creation of an inclusive learning environment. It would likewise continue to improve school-based professional support services and professional development programmes for teachers and, as part of its review of the implementation of the Framework, enhance teaching strategies, assessment tools and support on the basis of stakeholder input and best practices in schools.

10. The Government had been undertaking initiatives to promote racial harmony and to facilitate the integration of members of ethnic minorities into the community for many years. The Home Affairs Department offered dedicated services through district networks and commissioned non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to teach classes tailored to their needs, conduct integration activities and provide counselling services. It also funded community-based integration support teams and conducted district-based integration programmes and ethnic minority ambassador schemes. Furthermore, the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony continued to advise the Government on how best to foster racial harmony and to encourage members of ethnic minorities to use public services. The Ethnic Minorities Forum likewise provided a channel of communication between the Government and ethnic minorities and their representative organizations.

11. The Government of Hong Kong, China, attached great importance to providing members of ethnic minorities with equal employment opportunities and, to that end, helped ensure that the language requirements for civil service positions were commensurate with the job in question. Moreover, the Labour Department and the Employees Retraining Board provided dedicated employment services to job seekers from an ethnic minority background and endeavoured to match their skills to employers' needs.

12. As for to the situation of foreign domestic helpers, under Hong Kong labour law, foreign domestic helpers enjoyed the same employment rights and protection as local

workers in terms of their entitlement to weekly rest days, paid statutory holidays, paid annual leave, sickness allowance, maternity protection, severance payment and long-service payment. Foreign domestic helpers also enjoyed further protection under the government-prescribed Standard Employment Contract, which provided for a minimum allowable wage, free accommodation, free food or a food allowance, free medical care and free travel to or from their country of origin. That range of benefits was not necessarily available to local workers. There was no legislation governing working hours in the Special Autonomous Region.

13. The "two-week rule", whereby foreign domestic helpers had to leave the Special Autonomous Region within two weeks following the termination of their contract, was necessary for maintaining effective immigration control and helped prevent foreign domestic helpers from job-hopping and working illegally if their contract was terminated prematurely. It did not preclude foreign domestic helpers from applying to work in the Region again after having returned to their country of origin. The "live-in" requirement, whereby foreign domestic helpers were obliged to reside and work in their employer's residence, was the cornerstone of the Government's policy of importing foreign domestic helpers as, like in many other jurisdictions, priority in employment was given to the local workforce and foreign workers were only brought in when there was an insufficient number of local workers to remedy a shortage in a particular trade. Since there was no shortage in the supply of local, non-live-in domestic workers, any change to the "live-in" requirement would go against the rationale of importing foreign domestic helpers and the policy of giving local workers priority in employment. In 2018, the Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking in Persons and to Enhance Protection of Foreign Domestic Helpers had been adopted in order to guide government efforts in that area.

14. Since March 2014, a unified mechanism had been used to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds. It was estimated that $1.4 billion had been spent on the screening of non-refoulement claims and the provision of support services to claimants in 2018/19, representing an increase of 159 per cent over 2014/15. The procedures governing the use of the mechanism met the high standards of fairness required by law and provided for publicly funded legal assistance and interpretation and translation services for all claimants. Claimants wishing to contest a decision by the Immigration Department could lodge an appeal with the appropriate appeals board.

15. The Government was actively following up on the report on the review of discrimination legislation submitted by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2016 and would put forward proposals to the Legislative Council by the end of 2018. It would take up a total of eight recommendations, six of which related to the Race Discrimination Ordinance, by extending the scope of protection from racial discrimination to include "associates", such as carers, and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of membership of a particular racial group.

16. **Mr. Liu** Dexue (Macao, China), introducing the State party's report on the implementation of the Convention in Macao, China (CERD/C/CHN-MAC/14-17), said that in Macao, China, everyone was equal before the law and through the law. The legal system encompassed the prohibition of illegal subjective discrimination while at the same time requiring distinct treatment for different situations when objectively justified. Positive discrimination was admissible only as a measure to correct de facto inequality.

17. The Government of Macao, China, embraced and promoted the cultural differences manifested in the very varied local communities. Ethnic and minority groups were encouraged to engage in public affairs, notably through the mechanism for consulting the public at large on government policy and future legislation.

18. Individual interests, rights and freedoms were protected and promoted by the Ombudsperson, the Commissioner against Corruption, who also ensured the exercise of public power in accordance with the principles of justice, legality and efficiency. The Commissioner was appointed by the Chief Executive of the Special Autonomous Region and was bound by the Basic Law and by Law 10/2000 to exercise the functions of Ombudsperson with total independence. Adequate financial and human resources were provided in order to guarantee that independence.

19. The Ombudsperson's powers had gradually been expanded. The Commissioner could make direct proposals to the Chief Executive for new legislation or on the interpretation or amendment of existing legislation, and could issue recommendations concerning acts that raised human rights issues and measures of redress.

20. Access to justice and to judicial remedy was a fundamental right, with legal aid available to those with insufficient financial capacity. The protection of rights and legitimate interests, including judicial remedy, could not be denied on discriminatory grounds or on the grounds of insufficient economic resources.

21. Considerable efforts were made to publicize human rights, including the core human rights treaties, notably by means of new technologies and translation into a range of languages. Multiple strategies were in place, for example, to enhance workers' knowledge of labour legislation and labour rights. Non-resident workers enjoyed the same conditions, rights, duties and guarantees as resident workers, and information and counselling were available via a 24-hour hotline, an email enquiry system, leaflets and awareness campaigns in various languages.

22. **Mr. Marugán** (Country Rapporteur), recognizing the State party's achievement in raising hundreds of millions of its people out of poverty, said that, despite the decrease in the numbers of poor overall, the State party's ethnic minorities were still particularly vulnerable; they reportedly accounted for around one third of the total poor population, even though they made up only 8.5 per cent of the population as a whole. He would appreciate receiving up-to-date data on poverty reduction efforts among ethnic minorities. He would also appreciate more information on life expectancy in ethnic areas and improvements in that regard in the past 10 years.

23. More generally, he wondered whether the State party might consider switching its policy from a development approach to human rights, which it currently applied, to a rights-based approach to development.

24. Having examined the assessment report on the implementation of the 2012–2015 National Human Rights Action Plan, he would appreciate more specific information on the outcomes of the Action Plan. In particular, he would like to know what indicators of progress in combating racial discrimination the Action Plan had contained. Had the assessment report been helpful in devising new policies to address discrimination?

25. As to the 2016–2020 Action Plan, he would like to know what substantive goals had been set in terms of accelerating the development of ethnic minorities while guaranteeing their rights and what indicators of progress had been set. He would also appreciate information on the outcomes achieved in the first two years of implementation and on how the Action Plan was to be evaluated. He wondered what population groups had been left behind and whether they included any ethnic minorities.

26. The Committee, like certain other human rights treaty bodies, was concerned about the continuing lack of a national human rights institution in the State party. He would like to know what moves were being made in China and Macao, China, to create institutions that were in compliance with the Paris Principles and to bring the Equal Opportunities Commission of Hong Kong, China, into line with the Paris Principles. He would also appreciate clarification of the status of the Commission against Corruption in Macao, China: the representative of Macao, China, had described it as independent, and yet the Commissioner was apparently appointed by the head of the Special Autonomous Region. Could the delegation provide more details of the content of Law 10/2000?

27. He would appreciate hearing about the State party's collaboration with NGOs combating racial discrimination in China, in Hong Kong, China, and in Macao, China. He wondered how input to the State party's report from ethnic minorities and relevant NGOs had been organized: how many meetings had been held and which NGOs had taken part? Apparently only five registered NGOs worked with ethnic minorities and none specifically dealt with racial discrimination. He would welcome information on the Foreign NGO Management Law and the Charity Law, which, according to reports, had resulted in severe restrictions on the funding and operation of NGOs. What improvements could be made to the Government's collaboration with NGOs?

28. Despite the Committee's recommendations, the State party's legislation still contained no definition of racial discrimination that fully reflected the provisions of the Convention. He would like to know whether the State party intended to enact legislation prohibiting discrimination on all the grounds referred to in article 1 of the Convention, including descent and national origin. He wondered whether any survey reports, statistics or registers were available covering discrimination against ethnic minorities in employment, education, housing, health care or other fields. He asked how the State party ensured that laws and policies on counter-terrorism, separatism or extremism did not undermine the non-discrimination provisions of the Convention, the Constitution or the Law on Regional National Autonomy that protected members of ethnic minorities.

29. He asked the delegation to provide examples of criminal complaints brought in respect of acts of racial discrimination or racist hate crimes and details of the relevant investigations and prosecutions and their outcomes, together with statistics. He would also appreciate knowing more about the definitions and sentencing criteria contained in articles 249 to 251 of the State party's Criminal Law, on incitement to ethnic hatred and ethnic discrimination, and the stipulations contained in articles 230 to 233 of the Criminal Code of Macao, China, on crimes related to hatred and discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnic group or religion.

30. He recalled that, in its previous recommendations, the Committee had asked the State party to look into the reasons for the absence of complaints of racial discrimination. Noting that the State party had once again reported that racial discrimination gave rise to very few court cases, he wondered whether the State party had verified that the lack of complaints was not due to a lack of effective remedies or victims' lack of awareness of their rights, fear of reprisals or lack of confidence in the authorities. Did the State party recognize that hate crimes might be underreported? He wondered what support was given to victims of racial discrimination who wished to make a complaint.

31. The Equal Opportunities Commission of Hong Kong, China, had reported a significant rise in the number of complaints of racial vilification. He wondered what the reasons for that might be and how the Government of Hong Kong, China, intended to address the issue. He would like to know what the situation with regard to hate speech was in China and in Macao, China.

32. According to reports, the poverty rate for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, China, had risen in recent years, with the high rates among South Asians and Pakistanis giving particular cause for concern. He would like to know how the authorities there intended to deal with that situation.

33. Unemployment statistics were not currently disaggregated by ethnic origin, yet unemployment was reportedly high among ethnic minorities, in part due to Han Chinese migration into minority areas. In Tibet, for example, the major investment and development opportunities appeared to be mainly geared towards the Han Chinese who had been encouraged to settle there.

34. The State party's legislation prohibited discrimination in employment, but he would like to know what happened when discrimination occurred. Ethnic minorities reportedly had difficulty in reporting instances of labour discrimination and no action was apparently taken even where companies explicitly refused to hire members of particular ethnic groups. He wondered whether data were available on sanctions imposed for racial discrimination in employment.

35. He would like to know which bodies were responsible for oversight in that area. He understood that in Hong Kong, China, it was the Equal Opportunities Commission, and he wondered what financial and human resources were available to that body — and indeed to any labour inspectorates that might exist — to enable them to analyse such situations and apply administrative procedures and sanctions for racial discrimination in employment. He asked whether it was true that China had not ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) even though Macao, China, and Hong Kong, China, had done so.

36. He wondered what assistance was available to victims wishing to report racial discrimination in employment and whether the responsible bodies were able to investigate ex officio or whether the burden of reporting rested with the victim.

37. He would be interested to know the outcome of the State party's measures to recruit college graduates from ethnic minorities and how it intended to ensure that ethnic minorities were included in and benefited from the Belt and Road Initiative. He would appreciate receiving statistics on employment, unemployment and the activity rate, disaggregated by ethnic origin.

38. He asked what policies and measures were in place to prevent direct and indirect discrimination against ethnic minorities in access to public and private housing.

39. The Committee, like the Committee against Torture, had received reports of torture and ill-treatment of members of ethnic minorities. He would like to know whether the State party intended to undertake impartial, credible investigations of officials implicated in such acts. What steps had the Government taken to prevent torture in cases relating to national security and involving ethnic minorities?

40. He would appreciate receiving statistics on non-nationals, disaggregated by national origin, living in China and in Hong Kong, China. According to the United Nations 2017 International Migration Report, there were 1 million international migrants in China, 2.8 million in Hong Kong, China, and 354,000 in Macao, China. Would the delegation agree with those figures? He wondered what policies the State party applied in integrating migrants.

41. He would welcome up-to-date information on trafficking legislation, statistics on complaints of human trafficking and the relevant investigations and prosecutions and their outcome, and statistics indicating the ethnicity and nationality of trafficking victims. He also would appreciate more information on the 2013–2020 National Plan of Action on Combating Human Trafficking. He wondered whether the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was applicable in China, in Macao, China, and in Hong Kong, China, and whether the two Special Autonomous Regions intended to strengthen support and protection for trafficking victims.

42. In the light of information which indicated that members of ethnic minorities sometimes faced great difficulty in obtaining naturalization, he asked the delegation to provide statistics on access to Chinese nationality and information on the requirements for naturalization and on the means used to notify applicants of the reasons for refusal.

43. He would like to know whether China, Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China, intended to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

44. Lastly, he asked whether, as part of its review of the Race Discrimination Ordinance, the Government of Hong Kong, China, intended to propose amendments that would make nationality and immigration status protected characteristics and extend the scope of the Ordinance to cover government powers and functions.

45. **Ms. McDougall**, addressing issues related to the Uighur minority, said that the Committee was deeply concerned about the numerous credible reports that, in the name of combating religious extremism and maintaining social stability, the State party had turned the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region into something that resembled a massive internment camp that was shrouded in secrecy, a sort of "no-rights zone". It had also received reports that members of the Uighur minority and others who were identified as Muslims were treated as enemies of the State on the basis solely of their ethno-religious identity. The Committee had similarly received reports of mass detentions of ethnic Uighurs and members of other Turkic Muslim minorities, with an estimated 1 million people being held in so-called "counter-extremism centres" and a further 2 million forced into so-called "re-education camps" for political and cultural indoctrination; others had been placed under a form of house arrest. Most of those individuals had never been charged

with an offence, tried in a court of law or afforded an opportunity to challenge the illegality of their detention. Commonplace expressions of their ethno-religious identity had been made penal offences and used as grounds for detention. Further reports indicated the use of mass surveillance measures that disproportionately targeted ethnic Uighurs, such as mobile telephone scanning at police checkpoints, as well as the mandatory collection of extensive biometric data, including DNA samples, from all residents of the Autonomous Region between the ages of 12 and 65. Similarly, residents were reportedly required to hand in travel documents to the police and needed to apply for permission to leave the country, including for travel for religious purposes. Lastly, recent legislative amendments appeared to be designed to exercise even greater control over Uighurs and other minority groups through the establishment of imprecise and overbroad definitions of national security offences that opened the way for arbitrary and discriminatory prosecution and conviction.

46. **Ms. Shepherd**, addressing issues related to education, said that the Committee would welcome additional data on access to primary and secondary education for children from ethnic minorities, disaggregated by ethnic group, in addition to updated information on school enrolment and dropout rates, including information on the reasons behind low enrolment and school abandonment. In addition, the Committee would appreciate further information on the practical implementation of the provisions of the Constitution, the Law on Regional National Autonomy and the Compulsory Education Law intended to support the educational development of national minorities and their languages. In the same vein, it would be useful to receive an update on the implementation of the bilingual education framework in Hong Kong, China. The Committee had received reports that the majority of children from ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, China, continued to attend a handful of former English-medium "designated schools", resulting in de facto ethnic segregation that impeded their ability to learn Mandarin Chinese, as well as hampering their social integration and career prospects.

47. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator), addressing the four issues identified for follow-up in the Committee's previous recommendations (CERD/C/CHN/CO/10-13), said that the Committee welcomed the fact that the National Human Rights Action Plan (2009–2010) had been extended, twice, in line with the Committee's recommendation, but it would appreciate further examples of the concrete results of the plan's implementation. Secondly, while recognizing that the legal basis for the use of administrative detention and labour as forms of re-education had been abolished in 2013 in response to the Committee's recommendation, the Committee was alarmed by reports that those practices actually continued albeit in different forms and, now, in the absence of any legal basis. Clarification on that issue would be welcome. Thirdly, although the Law on Lawyers had been amended in line with the Committee's previous concluding observations, he would be interested to hear the State party's comments on reports that the harassment and intimidation of lawyers dealing with human rights issues continued in the form of disbarment and other kinds of administrative punishment. Information on the situation described in those reports would be welcome from the delegation. Fourthly, he would welcome more information on the situation of domestic migrant workers in Hong Kong, China, in the light of the State party's assertion that it had no plans to repeal either the "two-week" rule or the live-in requirement for such workers, as requested by the Committee in paragraph 30 of its previous concluding observations.

48. **Mr. Calí Tzay** said that he was concerned that the State party was failing to comply with its obligations under article 5 of the Convention, in particular, by restricting residents' right to freedom of movement in the Tibet Autonomous Region while members of the Han ethnic group enjoyed full freedom of movement. He was also concerned that the State party might be using its national security legislation to prohibit traditional religious practices and festivals of the Tibetan minority and had established national parks in areas traditionally used for religious purposes by ethnic minorities. In that regard, he would appreciate clarification of which Tibetan religious practices might be regarded as a national security threat by the Government. He was also interested to know what measures the State party had taken to combat the high level of poverty among ethnic minorities living in rural areas.

49. **Ms. Izsák-Ndiaye** said that the Committee would welcome further information on the legislative protection afforded to refugees and asylum seekers and on the availability of

appropriate information, interpretation, legal and humanitarian assistance, and judicial remedies for asylum seekers in China, in Hong Kong, China, and in Macao, China. The Committee would also welcome further information and updated statistics on the non-refoulement claims filed, granted and pending processing in China, in Hong Kong, China, and in Macao, China. In addition, it would be useful to have further information and statistics, disaggregated by ethnicity, regarding stateless persons, the availability of residence permits for the children of refugees, and any measures that the State party had taken to address the situation of the stateless children of asylum seekers.

50. **Mr. Albuquerque e Silva** said that he would welcome the delegation's comments on reports that some 640,000 members of ethnic groups that were not among the 56 officially recognized ethnic groups lacked political representation and protection as members of a minority. Information would similarly be welcome on the reports that ethnic Mongolians protesting against deforestation, coal-mining and other development activities on traditional pastoral lands had been subjected to state surveillance and harassment; and that the mass resettlement of Mongolian herders to largely Han Chinese cities — and the restrictions placed on their mobility — posed a threat to their traditional livelihoods and limited their access to Mongolian-language education. In a similar vein, he would like information about poverty alleviation measures and extractive activities being carried out in the ethnic autonomous regions. Information received by the Committee suggested that the compensation paid to farmers who had lost their lands and been resettled to urban areas was insufficient for them to maintain an adequate standard of living.

51. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** said that he wished to know what the State party was doing to mark the International Decade for People of African Descent and whether it would consider lending its support for a fourth edition of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. He also wished to know what part ethnic groups played in shaping the country's environmental policy and what was being done to further strengthen their participation.

52. **Mr. Diaby** said that he wished to know how ethnic minorities and their traditions were represented in the public media. Regarding education, he wondered how the State party's commitment to equal opportunities was reflected in textbooks and in bilingual education policies. In that connection, the Committee had received reports that Mandarin was increasingly being prioritized over Cantonese in exams in Hong Kong, China. He would welcome an update on the status of reforms to the household registration system, which were intended to eliminate the differential treatment of rural and urban workers, and wondered what was being done to ensure that ethnic minorities enjoyed equal access to prenatal services and hospital care. Information on the application of legislation adopted in 2015, banning the forced removal and transplantion of human organs, would also be welcome.

53. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that, with regard to foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong, China, he wished to know whether the State party intended to create an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee the working conditions of those workers, many of whom were mistreated by their employers; whether there were plans to introduce broader legislation to combat the trafficking of foreign domestic workers; and what steps were being taken to ensure that foreign domestic workers enjoyed the same maternity rights and conditions as other workers. He also wondered whether the State party envisaged becoming a party to the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and, if so, when.

54. **Ms. Mohamed** said that she would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on reports that live-in domestic workers were unable to terminate their employment contracts and that their employers often confiscated their passports. In view of to the adoption, in June 2017, of the Revised Regulations on Religious Affairs, which had resulted in the mass detention of around 1 million Uighur Muslims, she wished to know what legal protections were in place to safeguard those individuals' right to religious expression.

55. **Ms. Chung** said that, despite the fact that defectors from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were entitled to international protection, information received by the Committee suggested that many such persons in China had been subjected to violence or

trafficking for the purpose of sexual or labour exploitation or detained and then returned by the Chinese authorities to their country of origin, where they faced harsh persecution. She would therefore be grateful for updated statistics and information on the situation of asylum seekers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who were currently in China or had been returned to their country of origin.

56. **Ms. Shepherd** said she was concerned that the State party's bilingual education policy had effectively eliminated the use of minority languages in schools. For example, the Uighur language was reportedly no longer permitted as a medium of instruction and, in Tibet, an aggressive language policy promoting the use of Mandarin had limited the teaching of Tibetan in schools as well as access to Tibetan translation services in official settings, such as in court proceedings, in direct violation of the Constitution. Moreover, persons advocating for Tibetan language rights had faced repressive measures and, in some cases, imprisonment. She would therefore like to know how the Government safeguarded minority language rights, which were enshrined in the Constitution and in regional ethnic autonomy laws; ensured that bilingual language policy did not result in de facto bans on the use and teaching of minority languages; and upheld the right of ethnic minorities to learn their own languages.

57. As to the situation in Macao China, she wished to know what measures were being taken to ensure that students from ethnic minority backgrounds had the opportunity to learn Cantonese in the community, thus facilitating their social inclusion, and what initiatives were in place or were envisaged to enhance their communication skills and career prospects during the current economic boom. Lastly, regarding Hong Kong, China, she wished to know what approach was taken to teaching history in schools; what was being done to end the use of segregated schools for children of ethnic minorities; and whether the simplified curriculum for ethnic minority students — which was inferior to the local diploma, thus limiting their language skills and future career opportunities — was intended to be a short-term measure and, if so, when it would be phased out.

58. **Ms. McDougall** said that, with regard to the many reports of mass detentions in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, with millions of people having been detained in re-education camps, she wished to know on what grounds those persons had been sent to such camps, whether police reports contained details of the offences they had committed and what due process rights they had been afforded. Information on how individuals placed in such camps were treated would also be welcome.

59. She was concerned at reports that over 100 Uighur students who had been studying abroad had been compelled to return to China and had subsequently gone missing or had died in detention. She wondered whether the delegation could provide details of the current circumstances and whereabouts of the Uighur students who had voluntarily returned or been forcibly returned to China, in particular, those returned from Egypt and Turkey in 2017; from Thailand in 2015; and from Cambodia and Malaysia in 2012. Regarding the unified screening mechanism used in Hong Kong, China, to assess claims for non-refoulement by asylum seekers, she asked whether the authorities considered claims for non-refoulement made by individuals from Xinjiang and Tibet who were at risk of torture or other forms of cruel or inhumane treatment if they were returned to the mainland.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.